

UDOT begins traffic study

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Deseret Morning News

Published: June 7, 2007

The Utah Department of Transportation has begun a \$1.5 million study of east-west traffic needs in western Salt Lake County with the aim of outlining possible long-term road and transit improvements.

When finished, UDOT hopes local officials and planners have a better idea of where roads should be widened, transit built, and possible freeways added to help accommodate a growing west-side population. This is the first in-depth transportation study ever done for western Salt Lake County, at least in recent years.

The scope of the study will be from Interstate 15 to state Route 111, and from 2100 South to the Utah County line. The study began in early May and is anticipated to end in August 2008.

"When I travel through this area, I experience congestion, and it seems this (study) could be a benefit to the community," UDOT project manager Brandon Weston said in an interview Tuesday.

The study and its funding were approved by state lawmakers during the past legislative session. Rep. Ron Bigelow, R-West Valley, sponsored a bill that authorized the study. He said Tuesday that he was hopeful UDOT would come up with a more detailed plan for west-side transportation needs.

Preliminary planning studies from the Wasatch Front Regional Council show a possible east-west freeway at 6200 South in Salt Lake County would displace anywhere from 1,000 to 1,500 homes. Although UDOT's study will just be a plan, Bigelow says it could help businesses and homeowners decide where to build.

"If there's not a plan, then you just keep delaying any action further and further out," he said. "It will help a lot of people know up front

what corridors are going to be expanded and where businesses should locate."

At the end of the study, Bigelow said he would consider asking for funding to improve some east-west roads, although he said it would be "too soon" to even consider funding for a freeway.

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